

## Remarks

**I. Claims 1, 2, and 6 Rejection -- 35 USC §102(b).** Claims 1, 2, and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rizzo (US 4,393,802). In response, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 8 and a proviso that the term “M-shaped boat hull” has the meaning set forth in the specification. As amended, claim 1 specifies as follows:

**Claim 1. (Currently Amended)** A watercraft, comprising:

at least one hull having at least one planing surface;

at least one vertical step in the planing surface;

an onboard propulsion engine; and

means for venting exhaust from the onboard propulsion engine at the vertical step in the planing surface while under way in order to introduce gas along the planing surface [[ . ]]

wherein the hull is an M-shaped boat hull according to the definition of M-shaped boat hull in the specification.

Concerning the definition in the specification, Page 11 of the specification provides in lines 3-6 as follows:

In that regard, the term “M-shaped boat hull” herein refers to a boat hull that falls within the scope of one or more of the claims in U.S. Patent Nos. 6,250,245; 6,314,903; and 6,526,903, and those patents are incorporated herein by reference for all of the details they provide.

Thus, currently amended claim 1 is patentably distinct from Rizzo (US 4,393,802) along with allowed claim 9, whether taken alone or in combination with any of the other cited references. Currently amended independent claim 1 and properly dependent original claims 2 and 6 are therefore now allowable.

**II. Claims 3 and 8 Rejections -- 35 USC §103.** Claims 3 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rizzo in view of Field (US 4,989,534). In response, claim 1 has been amended as described above to render it allowable, and claim 8 has been cancelled with its limitations being added to claim 1. Properly dependent original claim 3 is therefore now allowable along with currently amended independent claim 1.

**III. Claims 4, 5, and 7 Rejections -- 35 USC §103.** Claims 4, 5, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rizzo in view of Burg (US 4,587,918). In response, claim 1 has been amended as described above to render it allowable. Properly dependent original claims 4, 5, and 7 are therefore now allowable along with currently amended independent claim 1.

**IV. Allowed Claim.** Original claim 9 has been allowed.

**V. Newly Presented Claims.** Newly presented claims 10-15 are identical to original claims 3-7 except that they are dependent on allowed original claim 9. Properly dependent claims 10-15 are therefore now allowable along with allowed original independent claim 9.

**VI. Reexamination and Allowance.** In view of the foregoing, currently amended claim 1 is now allowable along with properly dependent original claims 2-7, and allowed original claim 9 is allowable along with properly dependent newly presented claims 10-15. Notification to that effect is requested. Reexamination and allowance are requested.

**VII. Prior Art Made of Record.** The prior art made of record and not relied upon has been reviewed and it does not describe or suggest the combination of elements presented in the claims as amended. None of the *Alexander, Jr.* patent (US 5,685,253), the *Hull* patent (US 4,926,771), the *April* patent (US 4,649,851), the *Peters* patent (US 4,231,314), the *Canazzi* patent (US 3,316,874), and the *Cale* patent (US 3,091,206), whether considered alone or in combination with one or more of the other references, describes or suggests a watercraft as specified in the claims.